

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 788

By Towns

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Motown legend Dennis Edwards.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dennis Edwards; and

WHEREAS, a legendary vocalist and entertainer, Mr. Edwards was a lead singer of the iconic Motown hit makers the Temptations from the late 1960s through the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, born in Fairfield, Alabama, on February 3, 1943, Dennis Edwards grew up in Detroit; as a teenager, he sang in a gospel group and studied music at the Detroit Conservatory of Music; and

WHEREAS, prior to joining the Temptations, he sang with another Motown group, the Contours, best known for their 1962 hit "Do You Love Me," which was recorded before he joined the group; the Contours were an opening act for the Temptations in the late 1960s; and

WHEREAS, Dennis Edwards became a lead singer of the Temptations in 1968, upon the departure of lead singer David Ruffin; the addition of Mr. Edwards to the group, along with the direction of producer and songwriter Norman Whitfield, ushered in a new era for the Temptations, one that embraced a grittier sound that was largely influenced by the psychedelic soul of Sly & the Family Stone; and

WHEREAS, Dennis Edwards's powerful, resonant baritone vocals, burnished from years of singing gospel, were ideal for the driving soul music of the 1970s; shortly after he joined the group, the Temptations won their first Grammy for the propulsive, upbeat "Cloud Nine" in 1968; they won another for the funk anthem "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" in 1971. The Temptations rounded out their Grammy wins with a lifetime achievement Grammy in 2013; and

WHEREAS, other Temptations' hits from the early 1970s include "I Can't Get Next to You" and "Just My Imagination," both of which reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* pop singles chart; and

WHEREAS, while the other members of the group—Eddie Kendricks, Otis Williams, Melvin Franklin, and Paul Williams—also sang lead, Dennis Edwards was an essential part of the group's new sound on songs such as "I Can't Get Next to You," "Ball of Confusion (That's What the World is Today)," and "Shakey Ground"; and

WHEREAS, after departing the Temptations in 1989, the same year the group was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Mr. Edwards embarked upon a solo career. As a solo artist, he landed three hits in the Top 40 of *Billboard's* R&B chart, including 1984's "Don't Look Any Further," a duet with Siedah Garrett that just missed the No. 1 spot; this song was later sampled for records featuring artists such as Rakim and Tupac Shakur; and

WHEREAS, during the 1990s, Dennis Edwards toured with a group billed as the Temptations Review Featuring Dennis Edwards; he continued performing under this banner for the next two decades; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards was a vital force in the music of the 1970s and beyond, and his indelible contributions to the American music landscape will continue to inspire generations of fans and fellow music makers; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional performer and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dennis Edwards, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Edwards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.